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Liberty Loan Committee

Advertising the third liberty loan

New York

[1917]

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C. C. Williamson

Advertising the Third Liberty Loan

Suggestions for Writers of Advertising to Promote the Sale of Liberty Bonds

Liberty Loan Committee • Second Federal Reserve District.

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Bnf 616

Liberty Loan Committee
Second Federal Reserve District
120 Broadway, New York

TRADE MARK

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Advertising the Third Liberty Loan

DURING the first two Loan campaigns the Liberty Loan Committee of the Second Federal Reserve District solicited copy and copy suggestions from the advertising men of the district. This call met with a gratifying response, putting an abundance of excellent copy and a wealth of suggestions at the disposal of the Committee. To the ready coöperation of the advertising men, and the time and thought which they so freely gave, was due in large measure the success which attended the publicity in this district during the first two Loans.

For the Third Liberty Loan it is hoped that they will come forward again and in even greater numbers to take their share in this patriotic service. The difficulties incident to floating a third loan, especially at this time and for so stupendous a sum, are so much greater than were encountered in either of the first two Loans, that the coöperation of all experienced advertising men is essential if the publicity is to have the variety and strength of appeal necessary to make the Loan an assured success.

Records of the use and popularity of each piece of advertising copy were kept during the first two Loan campaigns, and the experience and information thus gained have made it seem desirable to formulate a more definite advertising policy for the Third Loan than could be done in the earlier Loans. In the belief that a general policy, briefly outlined, will prove helpful in enabling advertising men to coördinate their efforts so that all will

be working to the same purpose, the suggestions in this pamphlet are offered. In this way the advertising campaign, it is thought, can be given a cumulative effect otherwise impossible where so many and widely scattered workers are involved.

Outline of Copy for the Two Previous Loans

In the first Loan we were faced with the problem of selling $2,000,000,000 to a public wholly unacquainted with the character of a bond. There were in the United States approximately 350,000 bondholders. The prime necessity was to state and reiterate the A B C of bond investment, involving such questions as security, interest, conversion, etc.

The educational work done in the first Loan was cumulative. After the first Loan was successfully floated the papers continued to discuss bonds to some extent, and the 4,000,000 new government bondholders were an educational force of the highest value. There probably was not one of the 4,000,000 holders who did not talk about his Liberty Bond to at least one other person. Consequently in the Second Loan it became possible to use less copy about the investment features and more about the fundamental reason for the purchase of these securities, namely, the fact that a liberal investment of money in government bonds on the part of the public tends to protect the lives of our soldiers and sailors.

Consequently, at the beginning of the Second Loan, while it was possible to draw no absolute line, it was determined to put most of the emphasis upon various forms of patriotic appeal, maintaining the steady undertone of the investment appeal. A very close check was kept on

the effect of this copy. There were several thousand demands for patriotic copy against a few hundred for the most popular investment appeal. This tendency developed steadily to the very close of the Loan, when almost a purely patriotic note was taken.

Copy for the Third Loan

As a result of the Second Liberty Loan campaign, there are now 10,000,000 Government bondholders, and probably 90% of Americans know in a general way what a Liberty Bond is. The Third Liberty Loan will be subscribed, therefore, if the people can be aroused and stimulated to act as a unit. The consensus of opinion of advertising men seems to be that the best way to accomplish this is not through the investment appeal, but by emphasizing that the sale of Liberty Bonds is a necessary war measure, and that the purchase of bonds helps to win the war and to save life. In order to bring about the subscription necessary for the success of the Third Loan in the brief period of thirty days, there must be created an artificially stimulated atmosphere of enthusiasm which will make the individual say: "This appeals to me. There are many reasons why it is difficult for me to subscribe, but with American victory and with human lives involved, I will not hesitate. I'll go the limit."

In spite of this, however, there is still a considerable number of people who need to be reminded with regard to the investment end of the question. Secretary McAdoo tells of an old man who wrote him a letter asking where he should go to pay the interest he owed on the Liberty Bond he had bought in the Second Loan. A steady flow of brief, succinct investment copy during the Third Loan, approximately not over 20% of the copy run, will unquestionably strengthen the advertising campaign.

In this connection it has been suggested that the phrase "Invest in Liberty Bonds" be used more frequently than "Buy Liberty Bonds," on the theory that a man in the majority of cases *buys* something for immediate use or consumption—like a hat, or a loaf of bread,—and that the use of the word "Invest" will keep constantly and unobtrusively before the public mind the investment element.

General Suggestions

It is necessary to create and maintain throughout the campaign an electric atmosphere of enthusiasm, if we are to sweep the public off its feet into an over-subscription of the Loan. The following suggestions are a natural development from the foregoing.

1. The fundamental reason for the sale of Liberty Bonds is *War*. We must not talk of these bonds as if they were an issue of Panama Canal bonds offered in time of peace. In other words, "We must not talk in terms of investment when we should be talking in terms of human life."

2. Emphasize constantly and repeatedly the Victory element in the Third Loan. The first two Loans enabled us to *prepare* for the struggle, to train and equip our soldiers, and to get them to France. The Third Loan will give our soldiers in France the backing to send them to Victory. For the same reason the phrase, "When the War is *won*," is preferable to "When the War is ended." During the first and second loan drives we had few men in the trenches. In a sense the earlier loans were preparatory to action. Now our men are on the front in substantial numbers. In a very true sense, therefore, the third loan is a "Fighting Loan." Its success will depend upon our making our people at home realize the war and that our own men are in the war.

3. So-called "horror copy" should be very carefully used. It is believed that for this district the atmosphere that will prove most stimulative to the actual buying of bonds is an atmosphere of quiet and definite optimism and enthusiasm. Horror copy does not contribute to such an atmosphere. It tends to centre the reader's attention on the horror itself rather than to stimulate the buying impulse. Finally, to make the average reader believe at this time that America is in any real danger of the fate of Belgium and northern France is an impossibility. There are too many miles of ocean between us and the fighting front, and the normal American is too constitutionally optimistic. The invasion idea can be put across only to a limited extent.

4. In the first two Loans we had a big story to tell and not much "space" to tell it in. It was necessary to tell all the facts and to tell them over and over again. In the Third Loan the aim is to run much shorter copy, letting each piece emphasize only one aspect of the Loan appeal. By making each piece of copy a unit that can be quickly grasped, the advertising should gain immeasurably in punch and pulling power.

5. Individual objections to investing in the Loan must be recognized and the copy frankly directed to overcoming them. In this connection, however, the positive appeal has in the past been found much more effective than the negative. Not to berate or lecture the public, but to stimulate it to contagious enthusiasm will undoubtedly, in the present circumstances, produce the best results.

6. Make a definite appeal to women,—who are responsible for a large proportion of the retail purchases of the country. A heart appeal to them should have par-

ticular force, because Liberty Bonds tend to save the lives of their husbands, their sweethearts, their sons, their children.

7. It is to be understood that the plan of campaign is entirely elastic. The tone of the copy must often change radically during the course of a campaign. A sudden event in France may effect the whole copy tenor and focus the appeal on a development not hitherto anticipated. The copy writer will, of course, be guided by the general tone of the public, and in this connection items in the daily news will be found rich in copy suggestions and the closest coöperation between news and advertising bureaus is essential.

Vital Phrases

While it is not the intention to make this what might be called a "slogan campaign," we believe that the adoption of a few standard phrases, which by repetition can be burned into the hearts of the public, will prove a very great added element of strength. These phrases must, of course, be supplemented throughout the copy by carefully worded statements that will bring every possible impulse and sentiment to bear on the purchase of bonds. But the suggestive phrase that can be repeated over and over again gives the advantage of making full use of a fundamental principle of publicity—repetition.

In this connection, the phrase "Lend him a hand," has been selected to sound the keynote of the first two weeks of the campaign. This phrase has been strikingly illustrated by a picture of an American soldier scrambling from a trench for a charge. His left hand is reaching up above his head, and is grasped by a hand, with civilian cuff and coat sleeve showing, that reaches down

to help him up "over the top." This phrase and picture bring the civilian right into the trenches and graphically illustrate the outstanding, immediate purpose of the Loan, the effective backing of our army in France.

For the last two weeks of the campaign the phrase

Liberty Bonds
SAVE LIVES—THE LIVES OF OUR OWN SONS

has been selected to sound the keynote. This phrase is the logical development of that featured during the first two weeks. If we give our boys in the trenches a hand—with guns and shells and all manner of supplies—we protect them and we help them to win the war sooner; we save lives. "The lives of our own sons," brings the responsibility intimately home to every American.

Other phrases that have been suggested are:

Save more lives—Buy more bonds.

While your money fights the Kaiser, let your money work for you.

Prepare to do your ALL; less will be too little; Buy, etc.

Invest in Victory—the Third Liberty Loan.

Bring them home VICTORIOUS—Buy, etc.

and similar phrases involving the idea of Victory, as "The Sure Road to Victory—the Third Liberty Loan" and "Hasten the Day of Victory."

Additional slogans of this nature will be welcomed by the Advertising Bureau of the Liberty Loan Committee. Besides the use of a few of these repeatedly in advertising copy as outlined above, there will of course be a call for such slogans for use on letterheads, posters and other printed matter.

Specific Difficulties

There are a number of features which make the raising of the Third Liberty Loan a far more serious task than was faced in either of the previous Loans. Properly handled, however, these difficulties may be made elements of strength in the copy appeal.

1. The raising of billions is in itself a stupendous undertaking.

(*a*) *The very size of the Loan, however, can prove a powerful incentive to stimulate the public to the extraordinary effort necessary for success.*

(*b*) *The disheartening effect on Germany of the successful floating of so large a Loan and the corresponding encouragement which such a success will give to England and France, is a further incentive which lends itself to copy use.*

2. The constant reiteration of peace talk in the papers and on the street is a serious obstacle to the success of the Loan. People cannot be made to give their whole-hearted support if they believe that peace is but a few weeks or a few months off.

(*a*) *Much of this peace talk is undoubtedly insidious German propaganda. This is probably true of the rumors of popular unrest coming from Germany. Germany would like to make the American people think that peace was near at hand so that America would slacken her war efforts and give Germany a possible opportunity to defeat England and France. There is a splendid opportunity for advertising copy to show this, to show that Germany does not want peace, that the one road to a permanent*

peace is the defeat of the German armies, and that the Third Liberty Loan will make this possible. We must "lick or be licked."

3. There is dissatisfaction throughout the country with the regulating of American business and agriculture, and this militates against a ready and enthusiastic support of Government Loans.

(*a*) *Copy to show that these are necessary measures of a nation at war, and that the sacrifices of the man at home are not to be compared with those of the man in the trenches will prove helpful here. As a nation we do not realize yet that we are at war, and some of the advertising copy may be profitably devoted to "selling the war" to the American people.*

(*b*) *Enthusiastic copy based on what America has already achieved in the way of war preparation and war service—and it is no inconsiderable achievement—will serve to increase and encourage the support of the Loan.*

4. The great need is to bring home to every American that the success of the Loan is his individual responsibility. There is no real lack of patriotism, but in view of the rise in the cost of living and the unsatisfactory conditions in many lines of business, there is a tendency on the part of the individual, especially if he subscribed to the first two Loans, to feel that for the time being he has done his share and that he will postpone further action until future loans. The following types of appeal may help in driving home the idea that *everybody* must support the Third Loan.

(*a*) *The purposes which the Liberty Loan serves are based as much on the conservation of "goods and services" as upon the Government's need*

for money. That is, the Government urgently needs the labor and materials which are released when the individual saves money to invest in bonds instead of spending it for his personal satisfaction. That the Government may meet these imperative needs without delay, it becomes the responsibility of every citizen to support the Loan and so release labor and materials. This war is a war of national resources and if America is to win every man and every woman must contribute his share to the national strength.

(*b*) *The Third Liberty Loan means Victory and the saving of precious American lives. Every man should pay his share in the price of Victory.*

(*c*) *The Government's need is for money now, not in a few months, and the time for every man to act is now. America must act quickly if she is to hearten and to give effective support to an embattled England and France.*

Investment Copy

It is to be remembered that the investment copy in this Loan will comprise probably not more than 20% of the copy run, but there are certain investment aspects that may profitably be treated in this class of copy. It must always be kept in mind, however, that such copy should be as simple, direct, and appealing as it is possible to make it.

1. Many people do not yet realize that the buying of Liberty Bonds is possible for people in moderate circumstances. Copy that will show simply and strikingly how they can buy bonds on the installment plan, or by borrowing money from their bank for the purpose, has a use if effectively done.

2. The fact that Liberty Bonds of the first two issues are now selling below par will prove a deterrent factor to some investors. Striking copy that will show that this is a normal condition of war times and that the bonds will undoubtedly increase in value when peace is declared, probably going above par, will prove helpful in meeting this objection.

3. Copy may be written to show that the Liberty Loan is an insurance for good business after the war. If America wins, American business may look forward to one of the most prosperous times in the history of the nation. German victory would mean business chaos.

4. The Government must have the money to carry on this war effectively, and if this money is not raised by loan it must be raised by taxes.

5. The money raised in the Third Loan will be spent in this country and will contribute directly to the prosperity of American business and American labor.

Copy Should be Illustrated

The consensus of opinion among advertising men seems to be that Loan advertisements should carry illustrations much more generally in this campaign than was advisable in the previous Loans. At that time we had no soldiers in the trenches, and illustrators were of necessity obliged to fall back on allegorical figures such as Democracy, Justice, the Statue of Liberty, and Uncle Sam. Now that we have an army in France and consequently a splendid opportunity for pictures of action, practically every advertisement should be illustrated. Pictures introducing soldiers or sailors, scenes of action on land and sea, should be introduced wherever they are

appropriate to the copy. Allegorical figures should almost never be used.

Together, the illustration and the caption should flash the story of an advertisement so that it will get across at a glance, even when the copy is not carefully read and analyzed. The need is for illustrations so full of action and human interest, illustrations which so dominate the page, that they cannot fail to catch the reader's eye and hold his attention until he has unconsciously started to read the copy. There is a general belief that for Loan illustrations there should be a strong contrasting of blacks and whites, with as little detail as possible, leaving out rather than putting in lines. Wherever detail or mass is necessary, to carry the thought, it should be kept in light mass or shadowy outline.

Worth Fighting For

Your Bond May Bring Him Home In Safety

AMERICAN fathers are now on the battle fronts of France. Many must fall; how many depends upon us who remain safely at home.

A single Liberty Bond will help to save a soldier's life, YOUR soldier's life, and bring him home to you—alive and victorious.

LIBERTY LOAN COMMITTEE
SECOND FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT

One Hundred Million Americans Must Enlist To Win The War

Be one of the hundred million Americans to help win the war.

Plan to buy all the bonds you can.

This is your part and no one else can do it for you.

Get into the fight! ***Join the crowd!*** ***Do it Now!***

Invest in Liberty Bonds.

LIBERTY LOAN COMMITTEE
SECOND FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT

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